



Horizon 2020 European Dialogue and Clustering Action
*Transforming cities, enhancing wellbeing: innovating with
nature-based solutions*

A Coruña (Spain), May 16-18, 2018

Fundación Barrié, Cantón Grande ,9, A Coruña, Spain

CONCEPT NOTE

ADDRESSING SOCIETAL CHALLENGES THROUGH NATURE BASED SOLUTIONS

Cities have become a point of intersection of problems characterized by complexity and uncertainty, among which are the negative effects of climate change, increasing physical and psychological health problems, inequality, alienation, dwindling economic opportunities for many, social fragmentation and conflict. At the same time, they have been hailed as sites of experimentation and direct democracy, and as constituting the most appropriate scale for co-production of solutions (Garcia-Mira & Dumitru, 2014). Transforming cities into vibrant, sustainable and resilient living places has become a key global priority, reflected in numerous policy documents, city-to-city agreements, and calls for design and implementation of innovative solutions to tackle multiple problems.

Against this background, nature-based solutions have been proposed as a unifying concept that could capture both the end goals and the pathways or methods through which to support transitions to vibrant, healthy, resilient and sustainable communities in urban environments. Nature-based solutions have been defined as “actions which are inspired by, supported by or copied from nature” (EC, 2015) and have recently emerged as one of the main policy drivers for transitioning cities since these fulfil multiple, simultaneous objectives.

Many cities in Europe are living labs of experimentation with nature-based solutions to multiple societal problems. Several H2020 European projects have undertaken the complex task of implementing and assessing the effects of these types of solutions on societal wellbeing and risk resilience.

This H2020 European Dialogue and Clustering Action *Transforming cities, enhancing wellbeing: innovating with nature-based solutions* is a joint initiative of [Connecting Nature](#) and the coordination platform [Think Nature](#), and is co-organized by the [University of A Coruna](#) (Spain).



The event will bring together representatives from the European Commission, the European Environmental Agency and other international institutions such as UNEP or the European Investment Bank. Five large scale research projects, [Connecting Nature](#), [Think Nature](#), [Urban GreenUP](#), [GROW GREEN](#) and [UNALAB](#), will be present. Pioneer cities, public institutions, green businesses, financial institutions, civil society, media and culture organisations and researchers will come together for a lively debate on a diversity of urban experiments and to share the lessons learnt.

The event will focus on 3 main themes:

- **Sustainable Urbanization in Cities and Restoration of Degraded Ecosystems.** Critically reviewing the lessons learnt from the practical implementation of nature-based solutions in cities and distilling what is best practice in achieving more liveable and resilient cities through nature-based solutions.
- **Robust assessment of NBS impacts: creating the evidence base to inform urban policy-making.** How the latest developments on monitoring, evaluating and data gathering can contribute to make the evidence on the comparative advantage of these interventions stronger.
- **Enhancing innovation potential through new governance and funding models for NBS.** Focusing more on the management side of nature-based solutions, and the role these new approaches may play in upscaling the multiple benefits of this type of interventions.

The event will adopt the highly dynamic and interactive format of a pressure cooker, with guiding questions and specific outcomes prepared for each day aimed at maximising learning and exchange among participants.

Discussions, sharing of experiences and showcasing activities will have an equal share in this event, which will gather together leading experts and practitioners with a view to systematise evidence on how the multifunctionality of NBS can be used to improve our cities' liveability in face of climate change. In parallel a fair will be organised where cities and other green businesses and initiatives will be invited to present their NBS experiences publicly.



SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The **European Dialogue and Clustering Action *Transforming cities, enhancing wellbeing: innovating with nature-based solution*** adopts a quintuple helix approach to creating an exciting learning forum among European stakeholders, and builds on the current nature-based solutions EU programme and outcomes in order to:

- Present experiences, projects and successful NBS initiatives.
- Facilitate the collection and sharing of knowledge on NBS in relation to a set priority areas.
- Define barriers (scientific, technical, policy, legal, organizational, social and economic) for NBS
- Identify relevant NBS and critically assess their potential (real life examples) in urban transitions towards sustainability.
- Co-produce with lead international stakeholders an impact assessment framework to monitor the performance of NBS, so that incremental knowledge is guaranteed, and feedback used to improve future interventions.
- Explore the scope for replication and/or scale up of NBS projects, including synergies and trade-offs between different dimensions of their impact
- Develop and plan deployment of specific measures that maximise cost effectiveness and co-benefits.
- Exploring what kind of new business and investment models are necessary for the large-scale deployment of NBS.



ADDRESSING SOCIETAL CHALLENGES THROUGH NATURE BASED SOLUTIONS

The **European Dialogue and Clustering Action *Transforming cities, enhancing wellbeing: innovating with nature-based solution will*** provide the latest information on NBS and priorities for forward work, development from different angles and working sessions on best practices, addressing the following main questions:

- What are the main lessons learnt on how NBS may contribute to sustainable urbanisation and restoration of degraded ecosystems?
- How improving environmental quality in cities benefits social cohesion, wellbeing and overall city liveability?
- What are the best governance models for favouring NBS foster networking among different stakeholder groups in city transformation and risk mitigation?
- How can financing models and initiatives contribute to urban sustainability and citizens' wellbeing?
- How can NBS foster the emergence of new business models?
- What are the most promising indicators for capturing trade-offs and synergies among different dimensions of impact from NBS?
- How can the reference framework for NBS be best used for continuously feeding back into performance and design improvement measures?
- What is best practice in long term and cost-effective assessment of the performance of NBS so that legacy can be ensured?
- What are the best data management strategies for knowledge exchange and systematising evidence on NBS performance?
- How can this indicator framework capture the variations in the impact for the different stages of development of NBS and different temporal and geographical scales?

FORMAT

The content of the European Dialogue and Clustering Action *Transforming cities, enhancing wellbeing: innovating with nature-based solution* is organised around three themes:

- 1) Sustainable Urbanisation in Cities and Restoration of Degraded Ecosystems**
- 2) Robust assessment of NBS impacts: creating the evidence base to inform urban policy - making**
- 3) Enhancing innovation potential through new governance and funding models for nature - based solutions**

The interactive session format will provide a platform for cities, SME's, civil society organisations and the research community to share insights on the challenges and opportunities in using nature-based solutions to tackle environmental, social and health problems European cities face. Several European innovation projects such as [Connecting Nature](#), [Think Nature](#), [Urban GreenUP](#), [GROW GREEN](#) and [UNALAB](#) will showcase their demonstration actions of large scale design, implementation and evaluation of nature-based solutions.

The event brings together 150 delegates, including representatives from the European Commission and other international institutions dealing with the funding, monitoring and evaluation of nature-based solutions, such as the United Nations Environment Programme, the European Investment Bank and the European Environmental Agency. A selection of European cities pioneering in the implementation of nature-based solutions, together with public and financial institutions, green businesses, and other leading civil society and media organisations will come together for a lively debate on the promising urban experiments, in order to exchange their experiences, discuss their challenges and identify synergies for joint pathways to sustainable, resilient and healthy cities in Europe.

This event will be a unique opportunity for **researches, professional and cities** to share their experience, learn from each other and discuss the ongoing challenges in the following interactive sessions:

- **Inspirational keynotes** by lead experts in the study and implementation of Nature Based Solutions.
- **Cities Summits:** parallel Interactive working sessions around the design and impact of NBS, which will provide a platform to discuss technical and more detailed aspects of NBS application.
- **Nature- Based Enterprise Expo and NBE Pitch Battle**, where pioneer cities, SME's and other stakeholders will showcase their successful experiences and lessons learnt regarding the implementation of NBS.
- **Poster exhibition** for cities and projects to present their innovative nature-based solutions around Europe and worldwide.

- **Early Career Workshop**, where young researchers will share their work with experts in the NBS field.
- **H2020 NBS task force working meetings** where key lessons and way forward agendas will be shared.
- **Wrap-up plenary sessions** where the main points and lessons raised each day will be summarised and gathered together under a “Roadmap for Research and Action” format.
- **Excursions to see local Nature Based Solutions**, hosted by the A Coruña City Council and other optional free time-organised leisure activities.

FOR WHOM?

The event will bring together key actors (e.g. business representatives and market actors, scientists and experts, policy makers and end users such as municipalities, local and regional authorities) from across the EU and from overseas. Over 150 delegates from the Member States, the UNEP, EEA and the European Commission are expected to attend.

For cities

Join the sessions as a participant: Come and join the lively interactive sessions as a participant and ensure your city plays a part in this European Dialogue on nature-based solutions. Download your [invitation](#) here and register your [attendance](#) here.

Poster presentation: We encourage you to present one or several nature-based solutions your city has designed and/or implemented in a poster presentation format. Download the [instructions](#) and poster [template](#) here.

Join the Nature-Based Expo and Pitch Battle: Come and network with the exciting innovative nature-based enterprises and SME's providing solutions to European cities. Vote for what you consider to be the most relevant solution for your city in the NBE Pitch Battle running during the event.

For nature - based enterprises and SME's

Are you a

- Nature-based enterprise providing specific nature-based solutions for towns and cities e.g. green infrastructure, 'nature-based' waste and water management solutions,

- SME providing services to cities when creating and drafting plans to implement nature-based solution programmes in their cities e.g. GIS mapping; collaborative planning;
- Business providing products, services or solutions that create resilient cities

Would you like a once off opportunity to engage directly with decision makers from European cities and showcase your innovative solutions? If so take part in our [Nature - Based Enterprise Expo](#). Applications close on *20th April*.

[NBE Pitch Battle](#): Be one of the 12 companies selected to pitch your nature-based solution to city managers from all over Europe in a fun, quick-fire pitch battle. 5 minutes to answer 3 questions and tell us why you're the best!

Join the sessions as a participant: Come and join the lively interactive sessions as a participant and ensure your NBE plays a part in this European Dialogue on nature-based solutions. Register your [attendance](#) here.

For early stage career researchers

As part of the event, we are hosting a short session which is first and foremost aimed at bringing together those early career researchers who are studying nature-based solutions. Nature-based solutions in cities have the potential to employ many people and have even more potential to become new enterprises or grow existing ones. So, as we gather in A Coruña, and as we listen to the cities and SME's from many projects and regions of Europe discuss the potential for nature-based solutions, let us also see where early career professionals can fit into this arena and how it can benefit you from an academic or a practitioner point of view.

The Earlier Career Workshop is being coordinated by Dr Marcus Collier. More info [here](#).

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The main conclusions from the **Horizon 2020 European Dialogue and Clustering Action *Transforming cities, enhancing wellbeing: innovating with nature-based solution*** will be elaborated to take the form of a “**Roadmap for Research and Action on establishing a reference framework for NBS in addressing social challenges**”.

This document, will be made publicly available and will mark a milestone in the streamlining of efforts from both cities, policymakers and academics for accelerating transitions to more vibrant cities and sustainable cities in Europe and beyond.

Also, and based on the main discussions regarding the NBS impact evaluation, a **white paper** will be produced offering an overview of the current developments in the NBS field, identifying new tools and opportunities for long term monitoring of NBS and showing the added value of it, all illustrated with real life examples and aimed at informing the EU urban planning & sustainability policies.

In all, participants will find:

- **Why Nature Based Solutions? A Forum for the reflective sharing of experiences.** Meet your peers and showcase your start-ups and initiatives. Share what works and what does not for NBS. Learn from good practices demonstrated across the EU and worldwide, but also from failures, targeting new areas of interest and collecting open questions.
- **Towards a reference framework for NBS: best ways to monitor and evaluate their effects.** Distilling lessons learnt on impact evaluation of NBS. Identify synergies and ways of working together to exchange information on the performance of your NBS exemplars, allowing comparisons and advancing the evidence on them.
- **Where are we headed? Defining a roadmap with a view to ensure NBS meet social needs.** Meet and network with other relevant stakeholders in the field to discover how the design, implementation and maintenance of NBS can be adjusted to address specific challenges at different geographical and temporal scales. Exploring the potential for its application in accountability and transparency strategies.

A Bottom-up approach to inform policies. Be part of a key EU policy development (also local and regional policy) and feed into concrete recommendations for European and international action regarding NBS and interventions alike.

AGENDA

The event agenda is being updated constantly as new speakers join our panels. The latest agenda is available on this [website](#).

REGISTRATION

All delegates must register in advance. Please register your attendance using this [link](#)

DATE

16th - 18th May 2018

LOCATION

[FUNDACIÓN BARRIÉ](#), A CORUÑA

Cantón Grande, 9, A Coruña.

TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION

Information on travel to and accommodation in A Coruna can be accessed [here](#)

A Google Map with all of the main venues, airports and accommodation can be downloaded [here](#)

Any questions?

TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT

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NBE EXPO AND PITCH BATTLE

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ORGANIZERS

The *Horizon 2020 European Dialogue and Clustering Action: Transforming cities, enhancing wellbeing: innovating with nature-based solutions* is a joint initiative of:



FOUNDERS



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